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Dear Sentencing Commission,

First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony and the testimony of our public on such a serious topic. I am in full support of providing an opportunity for review of sentences of ten years or more, served by persons who were under eighteen years of age when they committed their crimes.

As a social worker, with a psychology background, I fully recognize in GREAT detail, what it means to be an adolescent. An adolescent is considered as a stage of human development between the ages of 11-20 years of age. The life stage of development is labeled *Identity vs. Role Confusion*; according to the well-respected psychosocial developmental theorist, Erickson. At this stage of development adolescents try to develop a sense of who they are and where they are going in life and can become confused on their identity. Meaning, adolescents have a lot of peer pressure from outside their home and it is intensified by the demands being made on them in the home. These mitigating factors should be reason to take a *second look* at persons in our correctional system, whom many of have fell victim to the peer pressures of wanting to “fit in”. This sense of confusion, on behalf of such adolescents, may have resulted in poor decision making, subsequently providing the outcome to be decades of punishment! Punishment for adolescents in general, should be put in place by adults to teach the adolescent to mature and grow from the experience in a humane amount of time, not decades! By bringing forth this issue in front of the judiciary committee, you are allowing these inmates an opportunity to prove their rehabilitation, their growth and maturation.

The juvenile justice system was originally created for children because it was obvious that adolescents and adults *are* different cognitively and therefore, should be treated accordingly. The question is relatively simple, what would happen if we began to have an adolescents decide the fate of other adolescents? Why will this NEVER happen? The clear answer is because the adolescent’s brain can’t fully understand the extent of the crime being presented and/nor can the adolescent comprehend all the legal terminology. Yet, according to our current law, a child who commits a crime is *instantly* an adult who can fully comprehend plea deals, legal terms and apparently what exactly life sentences without the possibility of parole assumes. Who can truly fathom the idea of a 30 or 60 plus year sentence as adolescent???

I understand that we *must* be in compliance with the Supreme Court and that this “resolution” does not guarantee release, and you are only allowing these individuals an opportunity to display their rehabilitation and that the lesson in their punishment has been taught. However, I believe that this “*Opportunity*”, is all many of these individuals want.

Again, I thank you for your time,  
Aurelia Price